United Nations A/53/177

General Assembly

Distr.: General
13 July 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Item 80 of the provisional agenda*
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Note verbale dated 10 July 1998 from the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to advise that the Australian Government has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and would be grateful if the attached media release could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

* A/53/150.

98-20438 (E) 140798

Annex

Media release by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated 10 July 1998

Australia ratifies Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

I am pleased to announce that Australia ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 9 July 1998 (New York time).

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty bans all nuclear weapons test explosions and all other nuclear explosions for all time. It marks a watershed in international efforts to address the global threat posed by nuclear weapons proliferation and is an indispensable component of the international nuclear arms control regime.

Australia holds a long-standing and well-deserved reputation as a leading international player on arms control issues. The pivotal role we played in the negotiation and adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a reflection of our commitment to the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. This regime is central to our national security.

The recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan highlight the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. One of the great achievements of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is to provide a codified international benchmark against which the actions of individual members of the international community in the area of nuclear testing can be judged. Countries which defy this code of behaviour, as India and Pakistan have done, know that they can expect to feel the full weight of international opprobrium.

The Australian Government strongly condemned India's and Pakistan's actions which are in flagrant defiance of international non-prolifereration norms and have serious implications for global and regional security. I call again on both India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without conditions or further delay.

I signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on behalf of Australia on 24 September 1996. One hundred forty-nine countries have already signed the Treaty and fifteen, including two nuclear-weapon States, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, have ratified. Australia is one of the forty-four countries whose ratifications are necessary before the Treaty enters into force.

Australia is encouraging other countries, particularly those in our region, to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible so that the powerful international norm against testing, which the Treaty represents is made as strong as possible. Australia is also playing a leading role in helping to build the institutional fabric of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at its headquarters in Vienna. This includes developing the international monitoring system and the establishment or upgrading of key monitoring facilities on Australian territory.